

# Advent Worship Idea

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Advent is a time of expectation, anticipation and preparation for the birth of the baby Christ. In 1999, at Seacliff, we made an Advent display on the walls of the sanctuary in our church. It was an exciting, challenging visual display which took us through this special time in a very meaningful way.

## Week one:

- A silhouette of the buildings of the town of Bethlehem was made from cream cardboard, outlined with brown texta and blutacked onto the wall behind the cross.
- On the wall to the left of this was a 'BETHLEHEM' signpost pointing to the town.
- Instead of the usual two vases of flowers, a potted palm was put on each of the pedestals with brown hessian draped around the pots and down over the pedestals.



**NB.** To make the silhouettes the right size, (approx. 85 cms tall):

- small images were blown up on the photocopier and placed on an overhead projector, and then projected onto the wall.
- Sheets of butcher's paper were then blutacked to the wall so the images could be traced onto them, thus making a pattern to use on the brown cardboard.



Week 2 on the wall

## Week three:

- Two long strips of purple fabric (3m x ½ width of polyester dress lining) were pinned to the pelmet to hang down on either side of the town, representing the sky for the shepherds and wise men. (Originally these fabrics were going to be draped above the figures, but it proved to be too difficult at the time.)
- A large three-dimensional gold star was pinned onto the 'sky' on the wise mens' side, (made from cardboard using an origami pattern and then spray painted gold).

The wise men now began to 'move' towards Bethlehem:

- the one which had been facing backwards was flipped over and the middle one was put aside
- a new silhouette with him on a camel was made
- their gifts were now visible.

## Week two:

Large dark brown silhouettes of a group of **three shepherds** were added on the left-hand wall, and a **group of three wise men** on the right-hand wall. (The wise men were grouped closely together and overlapped to hide their gifts.)



**Week three (continued):**

- On the shepherds' side, an angel (made from 2m of very white polyester lining) was pinned onto the sky and the hands masking-taped and blutacked to the wall, spreading the fabric to form 'wings.'
- The standing shepherd and one of the sitting ones were tilted to look up at the angel.
- The third one was set aside to make way for a new standing shepherd with up-reaching hand.

**Christmas morning:**

- The angel was taken down (too distracting) and the star moved to the centre of the cross.
- All characters moved into the centre.
- The wise man on the camel was cut off, creating a hump on the camel.
- The camel's feet were altered to stop him galloping away and a tail added. (He may even have been better off with all legs cut off and just sitting down).
- The wise man who had been sitting on the camel was tucked in behind one of the others into a bowing position; his arm and gift needed to be cut off and replaced by another in a horizontal position.
- The shepherds were moved to the stable. The sitting down shepherd was tucked in behind one of the others and tilted into a bow and a crook added. The up-reaching arm was cut off.
- Mary and Joseph were blutacked to the wall and the manger blutacked to the base of the cross.
- Yellow/ gold paper ribbon (1½ cms wide) were blutacked from behind the star to the wall behind each character's head, with three rays going down to the baby in the manger.
- The halo was sprayed gold to match the star, but could be made out of gold cardboard.
- Paper stars (sprayed gold) were scattered in the sky above Bethlehem.
- The communion table was pushed up against the wall beneath the cross and the candles, Advent wreath and Bible placed on a small table in front; gold satin covered the table.
- Finally, another potted palm was placed at the base of each pedestal.

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**Notes:**

- We didn't start until the second week of Advent. Perhaps Mary on the donkey and Joseph could be approaching Bethlehem in week 2, and then removed to make way for the wise men and shepherds in weeks three and four.
- OR: just the shepherds in week 2 and add the wise men in week three.
- *Feel free to adapt this to suit your own church.* Use different coloured cardboard for a different colour scheme in your church, for example (e.g. deep maroon on a blue background).
- We used **Dulux Quick Dry gold spray** – soft, 'classy' matt gold. Large sheets of brown cardboard (100cms x 70cms) were obtained from **Premier Art Supplies**, 43 Gilles St, Adelaide. (Easy parking too!)

**Editor's note:**

*Many people have adapted this in the years since it was first published.*

*At Blackwood UC we began on Week 1 with the Wise Men beginning their journey from the back of the church. As Advent progressed they moved round the church and reached the stable on Epiphany, January 6. One year we added Herod and his priests when they got halfway there [Advent 3?].*

*Mary and Joseph began their journey in Advent 2 from half way down the church but ahead of the Wise Men, and moved closer to Bethlehem each succeeding week.*

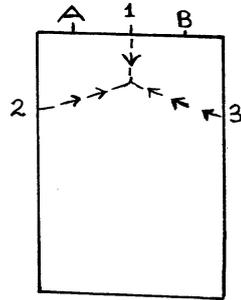
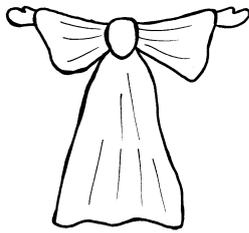
*In Advent 3 we put the shepherds up and the blue material, adding the angel and star in Advent 4 when we also changed the shepherds' stance to show their amazement.*

*On Christmas morning only the shepherds were with Mary, Joseph and the baby in Bethlehem.*

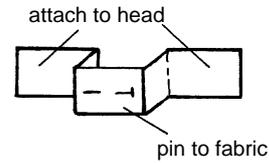
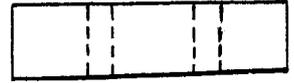
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# Two metre Fabric Angel

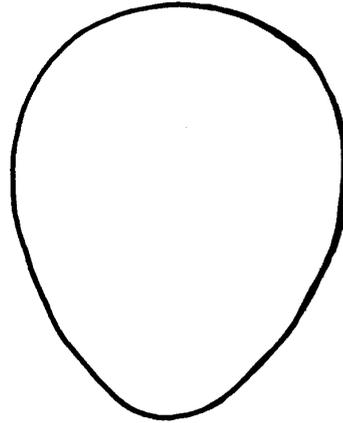
**To make the angel:** (no sewing required)  
2m white polyester dress lining or lingerie satin



**Tab** to attach head to fabric. Can also be used to attach star to fabric.

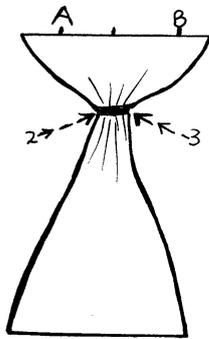


**HEAD**  
(enlarge to approx. 18cms from top to bottom)

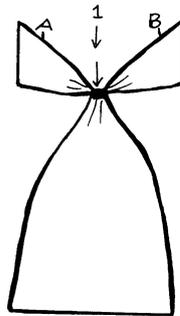


**Method:**

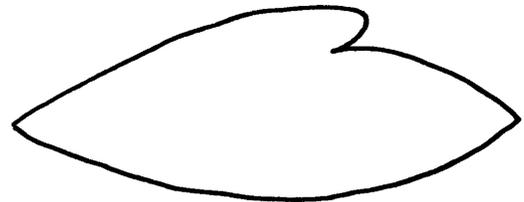
Gather material from points 1, 2 and 3 between fingers in direction of arrows until bunched in centre.



**Tie tightly here with string.**



**HAND**  
(enlarge to approx. 18cms long)



- Make cardboard head and hands, spray gold.
- Pin head over "bunch."
- Pin hands to points A and B.
- Turn up generous hem of dress and pin amongst folds. This gives dress a fuller effect.
- Lift hands to form wings. Hands should continue the line of the outspread arms.
- When pinning angel onto "sky" fabric, spread the skirt to emphasise fullness.

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